Self-Efficacy: The belief one has about her/his capability to perform a specific task or manage a situation.

*Learning Environment*

1. Difficulty with academic skills is often directly related to individuals’ *beliefs* that they cannot (read, write well, handle numbers, do math computations, work with technology, “do science” or think well)—i.e., they cannot learn.
2. Success raises self-efficacy. Failure lowers it.
3. The sources to which individuals attribute their success in math (ability, effort, luck, task difficulty) and failures (lack of the math gene, lack of ability or lack of effort) have important implications for how they approach and cope with learning situations.
4. Individuals become more engaged in activities when they can build on prior knowledge and draw clear connections between what they are doing and the world they live in (transferability). They need to feel that assignments or tasks they are given are significant, valuable and worthy of their efforts.
5. “Motivation to learn” refers to one’s commitment to the process of learning. Motivation determines the behaviors one will engage in based on their *beliefs* of what they are capable of doing.
6. For older individuals, failure following high effort appears to carry more negative implications—especially for their self-concept and ability—than failure resulting from little or no effort.

1. If these statements are true what are the implications for us as teachers? Our department?
2. What actions are called for?
3. I am now wondering ………………………….!

***Self-efficacy*** and ***resiliency*** are the single most import factors in student success. They foster behaviors like approaching difficult tasks as challenges rather than threats, setting high goals and maintaining commitment toward them, heightening and sustaining efforts in the face of failure or setbacks, attributing failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills which are acquirable, and approaching threatening situations with assurance which reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression.

Four Major Strategies to Increase Self-Efficacy

1. Create mastery experiences, tasks which individuals believe to be difficult, but which they can complete successfully.
2. Use examples of role models, enabling individuals to see that people “like themselves” were able to do it.
3. Employ verbal persuasion. Let individuals know that you believe in their ability to perform the difficult task. However, make sure that they can perform it. If not, they are likely to become discouraged, and say, “See, I told you I couldn’t do it,” and become even more convinced of their inability to perform.
4. Make sure the individual is in a positive emotional state. People who are angry, depressed, frightened, etc., have a difficult time believing that they can make a difference, i.e., that they can produce the desired effect.